

DE: ...By the way, notice that that would fit with your father's or with Khrushchev's belief that Kennedy would... might know about it but not say anything, might sit on it. Might accept it. But anyway, I'll now give you... let me give you the idea of how I see this fits together. This is really what I concluded... what I guessed 25 years ago, when I worked on this in '64. And I had somewhat given it up, but now I've come back to this theory. And everything you've said, I would say is compatible with it, confirms it. So what I'd ask you to do really is to think of what evidence you might think of that would either support or refute, you know whether it would cut against my interpretation because if there is something wrong with it, I want to know. That is that Mikoyan and Khrushchev, my theory is, did not - this is slightly contrary to your own assumption - did not simply take it for granted that Kennedy would not discover these missiles. I am assuming they had it in their minds that he might discover the missiles during the vulnerable period and might then act, to attack. Second, this is a new theory, that they must have had in mind the fear, the possibility that the U.S. would attack in ignorance of the missiles before they were ready, before they had been exposed. Those were two possibilities one, that they would discover, the other, that they would not discover and would go ahead and attack. So they had two problems: deterring a U.S. ignorant attack, ignorant of

the missiles, and deterring a U.S. attack if the U.S. should become aware of the missiles before they were operational. Another possibility is that they just didn't think of these two possibilities. I find that implausible. But anyway, I'm assuming that they did think of the two possibilities. And therefore that they had to do something to discourage Kennedy from attacking in ignorance, on the one hand, till the missiles were ready, without telling him about the missiles. And on the other hand, acting to lessen the probability that Kennedy would, if he discovered the missiles, attack immediately. One other thing, very mysterious thing, very hard to explain - what was the rush about getting those missiles in before the SAMS were operational? As I say, a very obvious point, one that they couldn't have missed. Why ~~not~~ put the missiles in? I infer from that that they felt under a time pressure. But what was the time pressure? There's at least two possibilities: the obvious one is, they were in a great rush to get the missiles in so they could push on Berlin. But as far as we've known in 25 years, there was no rush on that. I have another explanation as to what the rush was. It fits all the questions I raised with fantastic precision and that is this; they took the chance, the time, having made the decision in August, earlier in May, they took a chance on putting the missiles in before the SAMS were operational in order to have the deployment phase of the

missiles timed just before the election and to be completed just before the election. The deadline they were facing was to have the missiles operational before the election. As far as I know, you have no explanation as to why they would be a consideration. Do you?

MIKOYAN: No, no, I agree.

DE: You agree they wanted that but do you have an explanation as to why they wanted that?

MIKOYAN: Why? Because, perhaps this is not the explanation, because his idea was to announce about it to public just immediately after the election.

DE: Why immediatly? Why not a month after the elections? Why not put the missiles in after the election, after the SAMS are in and then announce them in Decmeber? Okay, I'll give a reason. - - - The reason would be that the following calculation in the mind of either Khrushchev or, who would be at this decision making level at the highest level? - Khrushchev, Mikoyan, who else?

MIKOYAN: Koslov, Koslov was his official second in the party.



DE: Who else at the top level would have been in on very subtle calculations at the top?

MIKOYAN: Mil<sup>2</sup>onovsky(?) maybe.

DE: It could have been any of them. You haven't talked to any of those. Milonovsky(?), Koslov, Khrushchev, Mikoyan, that's four.

MIKOYAN: Maybe Gromyko but his nature, he just said - yes. Always said, yes. So I don't count him.

DE: Mainly those four then. Milonovsky(?) was Defense Minister?

MIKOYAN: Yes and very friendly with Khrushchev, which was important. He was respected.

DE: Who was the military Chief of Staff?

MIKOYAN: Maybe, Zaharev(?) but this was not ...

DE: Didn't matter, okay.

MIKOYAN: Milonovsky(?) was the boss.

DE: Now, I'm going to give a political consideration.



It bears on the question which we have to know, what is the exact timing of the missiles? When do we do it? We can't do it before September. Do we do it September, October, November, December? You have a choice as to when you do it. What determines when, when you do it? Now in actual fact they put the missiles in from September to be ready about, they were expected to be ready about October 30th, just days before the \_\_\_\_\_. I'm assuming they're taking into account these two possibilities: that there will be an invasion or, I say, or that they might discover the missiles during that parat, the U.S. might. And I'm saying, you want to affect it. I suggest, they may well have figured - the best time for them to discover those missiles while they're vulnerable is before the election, not after the election, if we can make him very unwilling to attack before the election, which they do in two ways. First they say two things, one we've already alluded to, Berlin, we're unhappy about Berlin. Berlin is going to come up again. Very little had been said about Berlin in the spring, (no in the spring, there was something) but in the summer, very little. In September they say, - Berlin is on the ticket, Berlin, Berlin, Berlin, keep mentioning it. So they will be certain that when these missiles come up, Berlin will already be in the minds of these people, so there will be a connection. If we move on this, we've got a two-fold crises on our hands -

Berlin and Cuba, and that's a big, hot one before the election or after the election, either way, that would be bad. Here's the subtle. I think the meaning of these little known assurances, which the Harvard people have never really paid any attention to, but I was studying them very closely, the meaning of those assurances will not cause you any trouble, which is, as I say, confusing to the audience. \_\_\_\_\_ is trouble, what more trouble do you have in mind? In fact that's what Bobby Kennedy says, - what are you talking about? What more do you have in mind? You're already causing us trouble. What it meant was, without saying it, they couldn't say it explicitly, - they wanted those assurances to be remembered if and when the missiles were discovered, at which point the meaning of the assurance would suddenly become - we will not disclose these missiles. We, the Soviets, will not disclose them before the election.

MIKOYAN: Exactly, yes. Very good guess. Very good guess.

DE: Thus, we are giving you an option. If you don't tell, we won't tell. We are giving you the option of keeping these secret till after the election.

MIKOYAN: And then we shall talk together how to make it public.

DE: We don't want to give you trouble. We don't want to give you trouble. Now, why couldn't they come right out and say, - we're not going to disclose missiles. Well, that tells they're going to put missiles in. They didn't want to tell. They're trying to keep that secret. So they're giving a coded message. It's like an envelope - do not open till you get a terrible surprise.

[LAUGHTER]. Because they're all saying, - why are they telling us this? And then, all of a sudden, they say, oh, now we know. So, it's a very unisoteric communication. It says, - we're going to keep something secret. We're not going to tell you what it is. Now, my belief is, without going through all the reasoning, I'll just tell you the end result, my hypothesis is that the Soviet strategy was not to give themselves a guarantee but to increase the chances that Kennedy would accept these missiles if he discovered them during a vulnerable period. The way to maximize that chance is as follows: if he doesn't discover them, no problem, if he does discover them, you want him to know right away, before you talk to him because you won't know when he talks with them, that he has a choice here - that he can keep it secret until the elections. He can try to keep it secret till the elections, which is a very tempting choice, - let's put this aside until after the elections, especially because he knows that if he raises the issue,



they have given a very stern warning that they may  
raise Berlin right away. They said over and over again  
the following words - we will not raise Berlin before the  
elections. If you're going to raise it, raise it. He  
kept saying, - what do we care? The other side of that  
coded message was, - we will raise it if you make trouble  
for us. In fact they even said that, - unless you make  
some kind of trouble. If you make trouble for us, we may  
raise Berlin right away. We won't say what the trouble  
is. They're structuring it so that Kennedy will face it.  
He will face a double Berlin-Cuba Crises if he raises it  
before the election, which, remember is what he did.  
That's what actually happens. So this was no guarantee  
of how he would do it. But they could hope, I'm  
conjecturing that their hope was that if he were faced  
with a double Berlin-Cuba Crises before the election but  
the option of delaying that till after the election, he  
would choose the latter. He would choose <sup>not</sup> to do it till  
after the election.

MBG: Say that again.

DE: I'm conjecturing that the Soviet calculation was -  
if he discovers this before the election and if we give  
him a choice of postponing a crises till after the  
election, he will postpone it. But if he postpones it  
till after the election, we're going to time this so the

so - why send SAMs at all?  
(reg and delay U-2!)

missiles are then operational. Supposing they had timed it so the missiles would not be operational till after the election, till a week after, two weeks after. That gives him a week or two to hit the missiles after the election. The missiles must be operational before the election if this deterrent is to work, the deterrent of not having a crises before the election. Otherwise, if we wait till the SAMS are in, which is what ~~Dulles~~ *McCome* thought then they won't be operational. And even though the SAMS are in he may learn from an agent report or some other reason, he may learn, even if the U2s aren't flying that the missiles are there, he'll be able to hit them after the election. He won't have any incentive to postpone the attack. But if we give him this two week period before the election then he is tempted to be silent about the missiles during the period we're making them operational and then they've got to be ready before the election. After they're operational, he won't want to hit them before or after the elections. This, to me, explains what he was saying, all these peculiar messages he was giving. And it also explains the timing, the rush on it and it explains why he didn't wait until the SAMS are in. How does that sound so far? That's the interpretation.

too long

MIKOYAN: That's absolutely logical, amazing.

DE: Now, if you were one of those five people, of course, you could say, - well, that's all very clever but we didn't think that at all. But strictly speaking, I take it you've never heard one way or the other on such a thing from any of those people? If you heard it directly that would be all the better for my theory, but you haven't.

MIKOYAN: I haven't but I know that Khrushchev was very smart so he could think different alternatives.

DE: So this is within his ...

MIKOYAN: Within his nature. He was smart as peasant can be.

DE: This bears on another question. Were Khrushchev and Mikoyan being extremely reckless? As you know, the usual interpretation is that he was a wild adventurer on this. Brezhnev, by contrast, is much more cautious. Khrushchev is very reckless and adventurous. The best proof of that is usually given as Cuba. Look he did this which anyone could have known, had to blow up. Or, he did it without considering the very possibility that he might be discovered. It makes him seem either very foolish or very, very reckless. From the time I had this calculation in my mind, my thought has been, he wasn't



necessarily being all that reckless. First, he was calculating. Then we say, - well are these reasonable calculations? My own opinion, based on a lot of other things, these gambles were not unreasonable. They were pretty reasonable. The question is, might Kennedy keep that secret? Now, most Americans would say, - of course he couldn't keep it secret.

X MIKOYAN: From the point of view of Moscow, he could.

DE: Well two things: most Americans would say, - why would he keep it secret? National security, he might keep it secret for a week while he's planning what to do. Why would he keep it secret? And second, if he wanted to, could he? The usual answers are wrong. My study on crises, \_\_\_ told several things. First of all, might Kennedy have kept this secret in order to avoid hurting himself in the elections? Yes. Not one person you spoke to in Harvard would admit that. McNamara, McGeorge Bundy would say, oh, oh, what a horrible thought, try to keep this secret from the American electorate a matter of national security? Bullshit! Moreover, they know they're lying on that point. They're not just being naive. That's something that cannot possibly be admitted. It's a real secret but it's a secret very well known if you're close enough to the President, that everything he does is 100 percent

dominated by elections and by that. And of course he would lie in order to keep this from the \_\_\_\_\_, definitely without \_\_\_\_\_.

MIKOYAN These elections were very important to him?

DE: They weren't as important as a Presidential election but a congressional election is enough given that this would have hurt the Democrats very badly.

MIKOYAN: Given his age and his inexperience, difficult victory over ...

DE: All that counted but it's not necessary. Every President would have done the same on this, old, young, they all would have been very concerned. The question is, - would they have considered keeping this secret until after the election? Considered, if they could? Would they ask themselves, - can I do this? Can I get away with it? Absolutely, they would have. The next question is, they would ask themselves though, could they keep it secret? Here is where, I would guess, the Russians made a miscalculation. I know a good deal, not everything, but I know a lot about how they figure on what you can keep secret. The Russians would think, - he can keep it secret totally as long as he likes. What would make them think that? After all, they know the

system isn't the same. Why would they think that? They don't have a Stalinist system in the U.S. So why would they think they could keep that secret?

MIKOYAN: Because only three years ago, people in power in this country began to understand that the things which they are doing must be known. Before that, for 70 years, we were used that everything is secret.

DE: In this country. But why would you assume that's true in the U.S.?

MIKOYAN: But if you live in this atmosphere for decades you think that, I'm a ruler. I'm in the ruling elite and we keep secret.

DE: I think that's part of the answer but I'll give you another part of the answer.

MIKOYAN: This is your understanding?

DE: I won't say a better answer, that gets everybody's back up.

MIKOYAN: I can give you examples. Before three years ago, every article concerning important international issues published in our press had to be permitted by the



Kremlin. So they thought, not now, but before, decades ago, they thought that if some important article is published in the States, it had some approval of the White House. And no talk about the freedom of the press or open kind of the society. They just couldn't understand it.

DE: Now, let me give you another reason, which is at least as strong - the knew the President could keep secrets because they knew, correctly, that he did keep secrets for a long time. Who revealed the U2?

MIKOYAN: Khrushchev.

DE: Khrushchev. Did Eisenhower reveal anything?

MIKOYAN: Eisenhower did not say anything about it after it shot down.

DE: First he lied. Who disclosed that he was lying? He said that it was weather plane. Who revealed the lie? Khrushchev. The U2 had been flying for four years then. There had been not one word about it in the U.S. press. Eisenhower had, in effect, told Khrushchev, if you don't tell, we won't tell. We'll keep your secret. Eisenhower knew that Khrushchev knew. He knows that the radar is reaching it. If Khrushchev thinks, - if we don't tell,

we'll keep his secret about the missiles, if it would embarrass him and he'll keep that secret effectively. He was just assuming that it was the turn about from the U2. Eisenhower didn't embarrass Khrushchev by revealing the U2. Although, by the way, it would have served him politically a lot to reveal that we had this plane that could fly over. The Soviets couldn't shoot it down. We had lots of information. But he kept it very secret. He didn't embarrass Khrushchev by telling. And he showed that he could keep it totally secret. But actually, there is myth in American society, that everything comes out, the President can't keep any secrets. That's totally wrong. The President can keep lots of secrets forever with high reliability. Here's the point, what you have to know is, - some secrets the President could keep forever. Other secrets he can't keep more than hours or a day or two. It's not just whether he can keep secrets or not keep secrets, it depends on the type of secret and it depends on who want to leak it. Even if a lot of people know, there can be thousands of people who know, tens of thousands can know, and it never gets out. It's a question of what their perception of the advantage of a leak. If the President is pursuing a secret policy which those thousands of people approve of, usually a right-wing, the people who know tend to be hawkish who believe - military, cold warriors, what not. If the President is pursuing a secret, cold war policy, which

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would be damaged if that information would get out, it doesn't get out. The cold war hawks who know about it, don't leak it. For a generation, two generations, forever, they never leak it, thousands of them. Take the Mongoose plans, was that a well kept secret? It didn't get out in the U.S because the U.S. was doing something which the right-wingers who knew about it, wanted to continue, approved of, and they didn't want to \_\_\_\_ it. And if it became public, it would be hurt. The U2 was known about by tens of thousands of people. It was a big secret but tens of thousands were involved in looking at the photographs. If you release that, this program would stop. You didn't want the program to stop. So everybody keeps their mouths shut. But, on the other hand, the difference was, the right-wingers who knew the intelligence on Cuba, in the Intelligence service, wanted to attack Cuba. Information that legitimized an attack on Cuba that constituted a threat which the President was not going to do anything about, would get out the day it was received, maybe the next day. There was only one way you could delay that and that is to tell those people, to make the people who knew the missiles were there, give them every reason to believe that the President, as soon as he could get it together, was going to hit. Now, you can't make them believe that for a year. You can't make them believe that for a month. You can make them believe it for about a week.



MIKOYAN: And that is what he did.

DE: That's what he did.

MBG: That's exactly what ...

DE: So when McGeorge Bundy and the others, they get together, one of the first things that Kennedy asks him is, - how long can you keep this information? How long before it leaks? How long do we have to discuss this? McGeorge Bundy tells him. It's on the record. Maybe a week if we're active here. Maybe two at the most before we can keep this. Now, supposing on the other hand, supposing the secret was, we're going to assassinate Castro. It's going to take six months. Can we keep it secret that long? Why not, we've kept it secret for decades. No problem, that's no problem.

*Morgan*

MIKOYAN: I agree. You only keep secret with the idea, not let Moscow know about it, only with this idea. Moscow must not know about our future strength.

?

DE: Are you talking about Cuba now?

MIKOYAN: Yeah, that's why they thought ....

DE: That's why we can keep it secret. So the hawks will keep it secret for a week. It all began to leak.

MIKOYAN: In order not to let Moscow know.

DE: Then it began to leak because the hawks began to fear that the President was backing down. The minute they feared that, it began to be all over town. I'm saying for the Russians in September anyway, you have to ask the question, - who will it serve if this leaks? Generally there are no doves at that position or if they are, they're not going to leak. They're afraid of it. So the people to fear leaking are hawks. And the reason that they will leak is if they feel the policy is going to be too dovish. But if they approve of a sufficiently hawkish policy, they'll keep that secret very, very well. But this is quite subtle. See, even you didn't know this. Very few Americans would know what I just said. The question of, what will leak and how fast and how long is a very high level piece of knowledge. And I know it only because of my study of the high level decision making, otherwise I would not. Well, I would have known in my level of government. I was a high enough level to know that. The question of, - can we keep this secret and how long can we keep it secret? [INTERRUPTION] I'll just sum it up. Obviously they made a big mistake but the mistake was a very subtle one, it was not a stupid

mistake. It was not stupid of them to think, Kennedy will want to keep this secret and he can often, he can often keep secrets very, very well, if he wants to. Their subtle error was, which any American at that level could have told them, - ah, but some secrets he can't keep at all. He can't keep for two weeks. If, for instance, they had discovered, if Kennedy had discovered the missiles two weeks later, 10 days later, bad weather kept the U2 from discovering them, not on the 15th. He doesn't discover till, let's say, the 25th, a week before the election. He would have done everything he could to keep that secret - for that week. He would have said, - well, we can do it for a week. But we can't do it. Khhrushchev had kicked him in the balls because he had discovered those missiles too long before the election. He couldn't keep it a secret. It was impossible for him to keep it a secret for that long. [TAPE CUT]. I take it you don't know offhand anything that contradicts this right away.

MIKOYAN: No, no, absolutely and may I [TAPE GLITCH] ... just one minute. Do you know about such \_\_\_\_\_ ideas. They strike on the use(?) which was gold(?) \_\_\_\_\_ plan?

DE: Why do you ask?

MIKOYAN: Because I know but I don't know where from.



And I use this in my article, that this was origin is about 1949. The date of the strike was the beginning of 1959.

DE: You know about this plan, you say, as of when? Do you know what it was? What was it?

MIKOYAN: Yes, the idea was the strike on the USSR, \_\_\_\_\_  
strike on the 1st of ...

DE: Oh that one, yes. I know about that. I know a lot about that. I actually had another thing in mind.

[END OF TRANSCRIPTION].